

## MINUTES

**City Neighborhood Council  
Monday, February 24, 2003  
West Precinct Conference Room  
810 Virginia St.**

**Members:** Irene Wall (Northwest), Lisa Merki (Southeast), Cindi Barker (Southwest), Chris Leman (Lake Union), Doug Lorentzen (Mag./ Q.A.), Pete Spalding (Delridge), Ann Donovan (Capitol Hill), Catherine Stanford (Downtown), Victor J. Barry (Mag./ Q.A.), Dennis Ross (Southwest), Stephen Lundgren (Ballard), Mike Thompson (North), Michael Richmond (Greater Duwamish), Charlie Cunniff (Greater Duwamish), Jeannie Hale (Northeast), Susie Burke (Lake Union - Alt), Colleen Dooley (Lake Union -Alt.)

**Absent:** Cindi Barker (Southwest), Doug Lorentzen (Mag./ Q.A.)

**Other Attendees:** Diane Sugimura, DCLU

**City Staff:** Gary Johnson, DON

Irene Wall called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. Introductions were made

### 1. Welcome, Introductions

Diane Sugimura (DCLU) Special Guest Speaker

### 2. Guest Speaker, Diane Sugimura, Acting Director of DCLU

Diane introduced herself and discussed her background. She has been the Acting Director of DCLU for the past year. The Mayor announced her appointment and her confirmation will go through the Land Use committee before going before the full City Council. She has been working for the City of Seattle for 25 years including the last 13 years with DCLU, most recently as interim director.

### Key Issues Discussed

**Planning Function** DCLU will experience some “mission change” with inclusion of 10 staff members focusing on planning. When the Strategic Planning office of 62 personnel was reorganized, those functions and position were spread between DCLU, SDOT, DON and the Office of Policy and Management. Diane spoke about needing to do “subarea” planning.

**Budget** Challenges that DCLU faces are integrating Planning into DCLU and budget problems. In 2002-2003 budget was reduced by 20% from the General Fund. DCLU is 72% fee supported and expects a \$4 to \$6 million reduction in fees in this budget period.

While development activity has slowed, there are significant projects like Sound Transit and the Monorail. Similar to Sound Transit, DCLU will be funded by the Monorail authority for five staff positions to perform DCLU's regulatory functions regarding the monorail.

**Comp Plan Update:** The Comprehensive Plan will be updated in 2004, Environmental Critical Areas and Shoreline Code revisions will follow in 2005. The latter are state mandates.

**Permitting:** The Mayor has announced plans to streamline the permit process. DCLU is trying to change in-office review procedures to expedite reviews including putting senior level planners and code specialists on the front end of the intake and review process. There are current pilot initiatives to expedite code reviews for frequent customers and routine developments.

Question and Answer session followed. In response to questions about past efforts to "simplify" the code organization, she explained that these have resulted in better on-line access to the code, consolidation of sections on non-conforming uses, and more clear rules about height measurement. The next round of changes will focus on the commercial sections. The basic concepts will remain the same, the goal is to make it easier to read and easier to understand. DCLU plans to create an advisory committee (between 12 and 15 members) from neighborhoods, business, land use attorneys to assist in code streamlining. Focus groups for special business and residential topics will also be used. Sugimura explained that there is no intention to "remap the city."

Concerns were raised about ability of laypersons to read and comprehend the legal meaning of the code in many cases. Other questions were asked about coordinating code revisions with the intent of the neighborhood plans. Diane mentioned that DCLU and the Planning Commission did case studies on five neighborhoods with plans to see what changes have taken place and if neighborhood stewardship groups were satisfied with outcome of plans and if development was occurring as anticipated. Final reports will be published in three weeks. Neighborhoods were Rainier Beach, Belltown, Greenwood/Phinney, Morgan Junction (5<sup>th</sup> not identified).

Chris Leman noted that the work plan for DCLU doesn't mention design guidelines - adoption and approval and asked that the Fairview/Eastlake Overlay District guidelines be put on the work plan for approval. Ann Donovan commented that not all neighborhoods have plans; in the future neighborhood planning process may need to be revisited. Several questions were asked about planning for major transportation like the Viaduct and Monorail. Sugimura explained that SDOT is taking the lead but there is an interdepartmental group working on reviewing how these fit with neighborhood plans. Re the monorail, DCLU has staff looking at urban design and land use issues. Three leads report to Ethan Malone. The Design Commission will also have some oversight. City and SMPA are negotiating the cost of providing funding for 20 city positions to do monorail related reviews.

Pete Spalding explained a situation where the community has to constantly keep on top of DCLU staff to get enforcement action. Sugimura explained that there are only two persons to handle all vacant building monitoring. Progress is being made but additional work is needed. She mentioned that changing to “The Hansen System” software will improve enforcement and more up-to-date information will be accessible on line.

Other concerns discussed were about series of changes being proposed to the uses allowed in Single Family zones, including Detached Accessory Units, and Bed & Breakfasts. Concerns remain about parking impacts and questions about need for density in SF zones. Sugimura responded that Seattle is 60% zoned single-family. Currently, attached accessory units are allowed and 1,100 exist. Sugimura was not aware of the B&B issue. Irene explained that a potential B&B operator is soliciting support to allow B&B uses in SF zones. Other discussions concerned making the code less “opaque” and the fact that different staff provide different interpretations of the code so getting approval sometime depends on which staff person is making the decision. Also concerns that DCLU no longer provides answers on the phone. Sugimura said she is working to improve staff training and public access including an on-line questions/answer service. She mentioned the city of Redmond as having a very clear Zoning Code with clear Intent Statements, suggesting this might be a model for Seattle.

In response to concerns that “streamlining” the permit process will jeopardize the public interest in land use decisions, Sugimura explained that the public process will remain. Regarding having clear intent statements to guide code development, Irene Wall asked about policies favoring housing preservation using the example of the Hahn Building at 1<sup>st</sup> and Pike. The building has been vacant but formerly provided 34 units of low-income housing. Sugimura was not aware of details of the Hahn Building but made reference to the recent demolition of the Lillian Apartments and explained that the code can not provide absolute preservation of housing. Landlords have a right to vacate their buildings and DCLU can only enforce habitability standards. A previous Housing Preservation Ordinance was thrown out in courts.

Stephen Lundgren reminded the group to review the questions and answers which Diane S. had provided to CM Judy Nicastro, now posted on Nicastro’s web site. He thanked Ms. Sugimura for her thoughtful answers.

### **3. Review Agenda, Approval of Minutes**

January meeting minutes were not distributed (Secretary reports technical difficulties with recorder) there was no discussion. Dennis Ross and Stephen Lundgren asked to add items to agenda.

### **4. Delridge and Magnolia/Queen Anne District Presentations**

**Pete Spalding** explained pilot project to encourage participation by diverse groups in South Seattle. They are experimenting with taking the District Council meetings “on the road” at various host organizations and providing five minutes on the DC agenda for that group to give a presentation. In conjunction with the Delridge Neighborhood Association Neighborhood Plan, the Feb. meeting was at High Point. District Council is also

partnering with the Cooper School, where 17 different languages are spoken by students/teachers. DON is providing an intern to support efforts.

**Victor Barry** - Queen Anne/Magnolia, reported on issues currently dominating the agenda:

1. **Uplands Project and Magnolia Bridge:** Uplands is a proposed business park development north of current QA Bridge. Port of Seattle may not be willing to sell land. Entire project is “a big question mark” but has major implications for final location of new bridge.
2. **Monorail:** Council is paying close attention to location of monorail station to serve Interbay area.
3. **Playfield Lights:** District is still pressing for a new policy of all lights off at 10:00 p.m. on sports fields adjacent to neighborhoods. Lights on past this time are an invasion of privacy. This should be citywide effort.
4. **H.B. 1618:** Legislation to enforce air quality degradation from “the last smokestacks to be enforced by local law” – i.e. residential chimneys.

Chris Leman mentioned that SB 5602 is another important piece of legislation of concern to neighborhoods. This is the so-called annual “buildable lands” legislation which could force “upzones” if GMA planning areas are not reaching their housing targets. Chris urged all to call Leg. Hotline about this.

## **5. Committee reports and Operations**

### **Budget Committee Report by Stephen Lundgren**

Committee will meet Wed. March 12th, 5:30 at this location (West Precinct.) All are invited ; five persons have been involved to date in Budget Committee. Chris Leman expressed concern that the Budget Committee does not have a co-chair. Stephen noted that five persons have been participating on the committee. He said the committee is focusing on Transportation issues, Budget Priorities, CRF, Major Funding, Utilities CIP, Library costs (CIRP) and Budget issues related to implementation of Neighborhood Plans.

Stephen provided copies of his editorial to concerning Libraries for All and reported on the City Auditor’s report which raised concerns about funding for the Central Library (cost and schedule issues.) Stephen reported that CM Richard Conlin is interested in a transportation forum to address funding issues.

### **Neighborhood Planning Committee Report by Lisa Merki**

Lisa reported on a good meeting with Ethan Malone and Vern Knox regarding how to improve communications with neighborhoods impacted by monorail. Also met with Tom Hauger concerning 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update process. Copies of meeting minutes will be distributed to all CNC members via email when ready. CM Conlin is guest at March meeting. Reminded group that CNC Strategic Planning Session is March 5<sup>th</sup>. All are welcome.

**Neighborhood Matching Fund Committee**

Doug Lorentzen was absent due to illness and sent the following email:

“At the last NMF Committee meeting we reviewed DON's proposed new format for the CRT interview process with NMF applicants. Because of the short month of February and staff shortage, DON's answer to our questions won't be ready for our March meeting and that meeting is cancelled.”

Stephen Lundgren expressed concern that DON's proposal to have group presentations before the Citywide Review team may not be in best interests of applicants. It might favor those with more glamorous presentations, rather than focus on value of projects. Also DON's recommendations do not address the District Council level reviews. CRT has asked DON to refine proposal and respond to committee's concerns. Lundgren advised that CNC by Resolution is responsible for policy oversight of NMF and should pay close attention to any changes recommended by DON.

**CIRP**

Stephen reported that new members include Tim Baker and Tim Clifford. Reminded group that CIRP is a unique body because it's the only citizen oversight committee with the authority to refer corrective legislation directly to the City Council.

**Old Business/ New Business**

Stephen Lundgren refers group to letter from Ballard DC - Draft Resolution Feb. 11, 2003 - supporting legislation by SMPA to close out of city car registration loophole and provide certainty to Monorail bondholders of getting their money back if project is not built. Stephen initially invited a motion to have CNC endorse the Ballard DC's position but withdrew the suggestion after discussion by group. There was consensus that the issue is complex; and there is not sufficient time to full discussion and vote.

**Discussion of proposed CNC Transportation Committee**

During February meeting, the topic of transportation emerged and there was discussion about which committee of CNC can handle citywide transportation issues which cross between Budget and Neighborhood Planning. The concept of creating a new Transportation Committee was suggested. Catherine Stanford agreed to review bylaws and prepare a discussion agenda for March meeting about creating a Transportation Committee. This was included in Board packages. A lengthy discussion ensued about how transportation issues and costs are dominating civic agenda, are relevant to many neighborhoods, and it seems appropriate that CNC should have a means of addressing these issues. Funding of neighborhood transportation projects and prioritization of maintenance backlog was a driving issue within CNC Budget committee in the 1997-2000 years so CNC interest is well established.

**Victor Barry made motion to create a Transportation Committee.  
Jeanne Hale seconds motion.**

The Chair asked each representative in turn to speak to the issue. Most spoke in support of the concept of taking the initial step of creating a committee while acknowledging concerns about it being well focused and representative of citywide needs. Vic Barry and Ann Donovan suggested that CNC runs risk of seeming “irrelevant” if we’re not perceived as addressing the major issues facing the city. Chris Leman spoke in opposition to the idea on the basis that it will be duplicative of other ad-hoc transportation-related citizen advisory bodies established by the Mayor or Council; it will siphon time and energy from CNC’s other priorities; there has not been sufficient time to discuss the idea at District Councils; and it sets a precedent for creating other special interest committees and neighborhoods facing Light Rail, Monorail and other construction projects are already dealing with these issues.

Two members called for a vote. Chris Leman offered amendment to the motion calling instead for a resolution to give further consideration to the concept. Not accepted as friendly amendment. At this time Chris Leman also quoted a section of the CNC by-laws as follows:

CNC by-laws, section 6.1:

Decision-making. A goal of the CNC is to reach decision by consensus through a process of open dialogue in which issues are presented, defined, discussed and resolved. The Chair will decide whether representation at the meeting is sufficient to assure a fair and adequate hearing of perspectives and opinions. If, in the opinion of the Chair, consensus cannot be reached, the CNC shall decide on one or more of the following alternatives:

- (1) Continue discussion until consensus is reached;
- (2) Defer to a committee who will be charged with presenting improvements or alternatives to the proposal for future CNC consideration;
- (3) Drop the matter; or
- (4) If a quorum is present, a simple majority (51% of those present and eligible to vote) may decide to vote on the issue. If that vote passes, a simple majority vote, as defined above, will resolve the issue.

There ensued a 10-minute debate on the application of CNC rules for achieving consensus. A point of order was made calling for a vote on the motion.

Chair calls for a vote.

**Vote is 11 to 1 in favor of motion to establish a Transportation Committee.**

The motion does not establish committee membership, rules, or work program; that will be developed after further discussion and consultation at District Council level. New committee will also be a topic at upcoming (March 5<sup>th</sup>) Strategic Planning session.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:45 pm

